

Foundation moves into home it helped restore

Earlier this month, The Kresge Foundation moved into new quarters across Big Beaver Rd. from KIH.

The site is the Brooks farmstead, a humble unpolished gem surrounded by towering rows of shiny contemporary Troy office buildings.

Built in 1852, the Brooks home now sports a 10,000-square-foot addition that sits quietly behind the original structure.

The office of Kresge Foundation Chairman William H. Baldwin is in the renovated house, along with the board room, meeting rooms and a reception area. The rest of the staff is housed in the addition.

The foundation bought the property in 1982 after the death of owner Bertha Brooks Parks. Construction and renovation took 14 months.

The new location itself vividly illustrates the foundation's concern for issues such as historic preservation. One of the largest such organizations in the U.S., The Kresge Foundation supports higher education, health care, social services, arts and humanities, science, conservation, public policy and religion.

Formerly located in the Standard Federal Building at 2401 W. Big Beaver, the foundation outgrew its offices two years ago.

"A golden opportunity" is how Bill Lipscomb of the foundation program staff described the farmstead. "We could do something nice for the city of Troy, since they wanted to preserve the site, and at the same time we could expand our offices."

To make the farmhouse workable and build a compatible addition, the architectural firm of William Kessler and Associates of Detroit researched the farm's historical materials.

"We didn't want to try to imitate the architecture. We wanted something that was sympathetic to the old structure," explains Lipscomb.

"We did want to have the addition below the grade of the farmhouse roof so as little as possible of the new part would

be seen from the road. This keeps the focus on the historical part."

The addition was designed in a modified "U." The eastern exterior wall is all glass, allowing office personnel to see the rest of the farmsite.

The farmhouse is renovated in Victorian style with antiques, carpeting and wallpaper depicting that era.

The farmhouse is of Greek Revival architecture with Victorian-Italianate porches. Split-faced stone was the primary construction material.

The farmstead is listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior, which keeps records of buildings that are architecturally and historically significant.

The other buildings on the site have also been restored. One of the two working windmills is used to irrigate the property. Well water will be stored in a 4,000-gallon tank and pumped through the underground sprinkling system. Two of the smaller outbuildings house maintenance materials and the heating and air conditioning units.

Built by Washington Stanley, a dairy farmer from Vermont, the farmsite was sold in 1873 to Frank Ford, who sold it to William Brooks in 1911. The original site was 300 acres but shrank to three in the mid-'60s when the Brooks family sold most of the property to commercial developers.

The original barn collapsed in 1975 and was replaced with a replica. The city of Troy owned this barn and offered it for

\$10 if the foundation would move it from 18 Mile to the Brooks farmstead.

Kresge Company Founder Sebastian S. Kresge established The Kresge Foundation in 1924. (Except for the common founder, there is no connection between K mart Corporation and The Kresge Foundation.)

The foundation has granted funds to nonprofit organizations since its founding. Called challenge grants, they require the recipient to raise the balance of the money needed to complete the project.

In 1983 the foundation made grants totaling \$35.6 million. This year the organization has authorized \$5 million for the new Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, which will distribute funds primarily to educational and cultural institutions and other organizations which normally do not receive state funding.

Other Michigan grants from The Kresge Foundation include \$100,000 to the Coalition on Temporary Shelter in Downtown Detroit; \$250,000 to Crittenton Hospital in Rochester for renovation; \$40,000 to Gleaners Community Food Bank for expansion of storage facilities; \$50,000 to renovate The Haven in Pontiac, a shelter for abused women; and \$150,000 for construction of Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center in Detroit, a drug and alcohol detoxification center.

Nationally, the foundation recently pledged \$3 million toward the repair of the Statue of Liberty.



The Brooks barn and other estate buildings provide an interesting contrast to K mart International Headquarters and the many other contemporary structures along Big Beaver Rd.



The architects intended to design a modern addition that would not clash with the Greek Revival design of the farmhouse. The new offices (foreground) are east of the original structure.